

same side when it comes to support for the men and women who keep us safe and for our vulnerable international partners who look to us for leadership.

### HEALTHCARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, this week, we will vote on another effort by our Democratic colleagues to undo successful Trump administration policy. In recent days, our colleagues across the aisle have forced two failed votes on similar resolutions. One would have cut taxes for the wealthiest residents in blue States at the expense of working families everywhere else. The other would have resurrected an Obama-era proposal to bury American energy under red tape.

Both of those efforts failed, but our Democratic colleagues are back at it—back at it—with another bad policy. This time, they would like to reverse Trump administration guidance that has reduced healthcare premiums for American families and reaffirmed protections for those with preexisting conditions.

Section 1332 of ObamaCare gives States the opportunity to escape some of that law's worst burdens. States have the opportunity to apply for waivers that allow for more types of health insurance plans and more options for consumers.

More than a dozen States have already had these waivers approved, not just red States. Democratic Governors in places like Colorado, Delaware, and Rhode Island have applied for and received these waivers. Where Governors of both parties are embracing this opportunity, good things are happening. According to one analysis, in the seven States where new waivers were implemented during the Trump administration, it seems that premiums declined—declined—by 7.5 percent.

The Trump administration guidance continues this success and gives States even more of what they asked for—even more flexibility to escape ObamaCare's burdens and more choices for consumers and lower premiums. But, apparently, our Democratic colleagues are not terribly fond of letting States shake off the unhelpful strictures of ObamaCare. Perhaps, it makes their signature law look bad that Governors of both parties are so eager to escape it.

That can't be their public argument. In their effort to reduce this flexibility, some Democrats are rehashing tired, old claims about a conspiracy to hurt Americans with preexisting conditions. Republicans have been clear, and we have been consistent. We support protections for Americans with preexisting conditions.

The CMS Administrator, Seema Verma, has specifically stated that "a section 1332 waiver cannot undermine coverage for people with pre-existing conditions." That is the head of CMS.

In fact, it is this Trump administration's policy that will help American

families, including those with pre-existing conditions, by helping to bring down the soaring premiums and restore the dwindling options that ObamaCare's failures have brought about.

I urge the Senate to reject this misguided resolution. We don't need healthcare policy from the supporters of "Medicare for None," Democrats' grand scheme to take away the health insurance plans of 180 million Americans and replace it with a one-size-fits-all government plan. Americans deserve more say, not less.

### HEMP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on one final matter, when I joined President Trump last year as he signed the farm bill, we marked a new chapter for an historic American crop. In a victory for growers, processors, and manufacturers across the country, especially in my home State of Kentucky, my initiative for full hemp legalization became law.

This morning, the U.S. Department of Agriculture plans to take the important next step. Secretary Perdue will release a new USDA regulation to implement my initiative and move hemp closer to being treated just like every other commodity. This new policy will help farmers around the country continue pioneering this crop into the 21st century.

I am proud to say that Kentucky is prepared to take the lead. For generations, our growers and producers have made the Bluegrass State an agricultural powerhouse, well-positioned at the forefront of hemp's resurgence. Following the downturn in tobacco, it was my tobacco buyout legislation that helped farmers transition toward new opportunities, and a growing number are looking to this past crop—one grown by Washington, Jefferson, and Henry Clay—as they plan for the future.

As the buyout payments came to an end, I secured the creation of hemp pilot programs in the 2014 farm bill, empowering farmers and researchers to begin a multiyear experiment with hemp's capabilities.

Thanks to leaders like Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles and his predecessor, now-Congressman JAMES COMER, Kentucky was leading the charge. The results were clear. The pilot program was working. So we knew the 2018 farm bill had to take the next step.

I am grateful to Agriculture Committee Chairman PAT ROBERTS, who included my hemp initiative in the bill that is now law. I would also like to thank the many Members on both sides of the aisle, including Senator RON WYDEN, who have helped in this effort as well.

My hemp provisions in the farm bill directed USDA to craft a new regulatory framework so hemp could be cultivated nationwide, with each State

given the opportunity to develop its own plan for hemp oversight.

I am grateful that Secretary Perdue accepted my invitation for a Kentucky hemp tour so he could see our progress up close and learn from Kentucky hemp farmers and regulators as USDA developed its policies.

This year alone, hemp is growing on more than 26,000 acres in Kentucky, across 101 of our 120 counties. It supports hundreds of jobs and tens of millions in sales.

I impressed upon USDA the need to finalize this new framework before the 2020 growing season. I would like to thank Secretary Perdue and the USDA for fulfilling this commitment with the announcement we are expecting later this morning. I look forward to reviewing USDA's guidelines and hearing from hemp stakeholders around Kentucky.

Our work to support the future of hemp is hardly over. There are ongoing conversations with the FDA on CBD products and ongoing work to help growers and retailers to access credit and financial products. There will inevitably be ups and downs as this new industry develops, but today's announcement is another crucial step. It is a privilege for me to stand with Kentucky farmers every step of the way. Together, we will continue charting hemp's course well into the future.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, TRANSPORTATION, AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2020

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3055, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3055) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Shelby amendment No. 948, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Shelby) amendment No. 950, to make a technical correction.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.